

City Planning Department



Memo

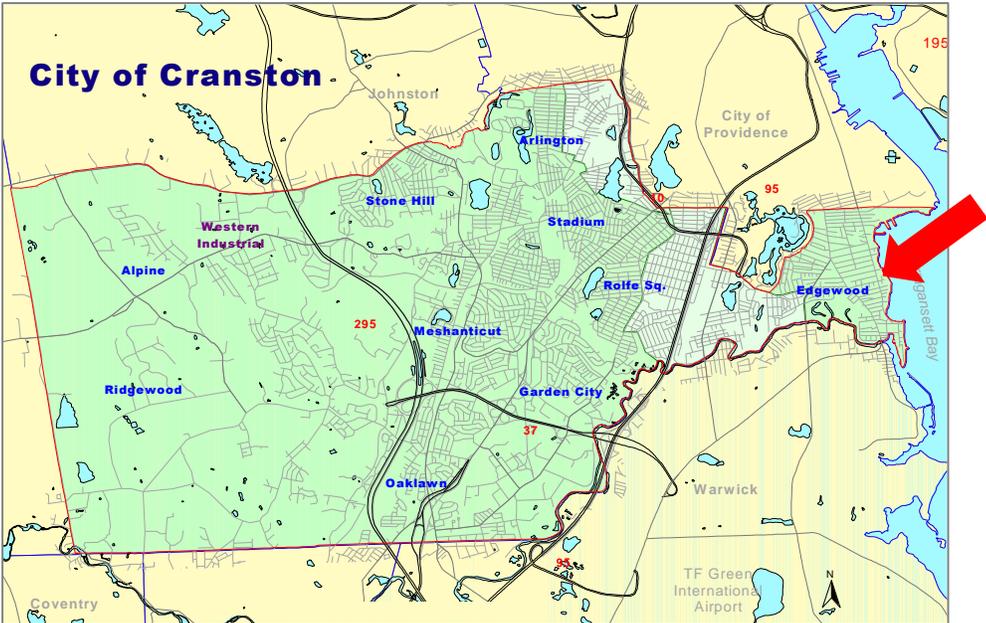
To: Cranston City Plan Commission
From: Joshua Berry, AICP, Senior Planner
Date: September 27, 2021
Re: Dimensional Variance Application for 42 Bluff Avenue

Owner/App: Kelley McLaughlin
Location: 42 Bluff Avenue (AP 2, Lot 932)
Zone: A-12 (Single-Fam on 12,000 ft² Lots)
FLU: Highway Commercial/Services

DIMENSIONAL VARIANCE REQUEST:

1. To allow a detached garage to be constructed within the front yard setback. [17.20.120 – Schedule of intensity]
2. To allow a detached garage to be constructed in the required front yard which is required to be unobstructed & free of structures. [17.20.110(B). Residential Yard Exceptions]
3. To allow a curb cut with a 24' width above the 20' width maximum. [17.64.010 – Off-Street Parking]

LOCATION MAP



ZONING MAP



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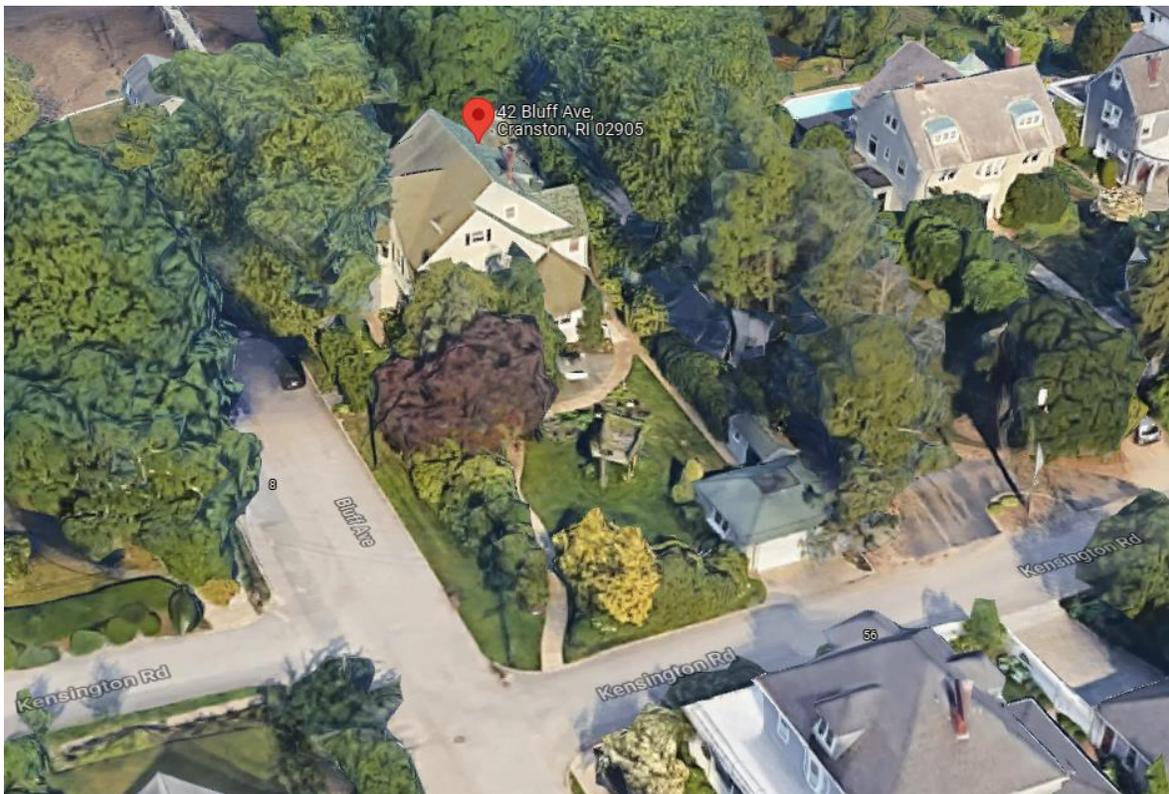


City of Cranston

NEIGHBORHOOD AERIAL



3D Aerial (facing east)



STREET VIEW (Bluff Ave)



STREET VIEW (Kensington Rd)



EXISTING CONDITIONS
(Kensington Rd facing north)



(Kensington Rd facing south)



WEST ELEVATION



NORTH ELEVATION



FINDINGS OF FACT:

1. Due to the relationship between the lot shape & size, setbacks, and the location of the existing single-family residence, there is no viable location for a detached garage that is not between the primary residence and a public right of way.
2. The existing garage abuts the lot line between the subject property and Kensington Road and only inches from the interior side lot line between the subject property and the abutting lot (AP 2 Lot 933) to the south. Granting relief would allow the garage to come into greater conformity with both setbacks, proposed at a location 5' away from the side lot line (8' is required) and 8'-3" away from the front property line (25' is required).
3. The garage is designed to have storage area so that the applicant can raze the existing nonconforming shed located on the interior side property line.
4. The proposed 42' x 32' garage would have room for four (4) cars. The relocation of the garage from its current location would increase the driveway length from 9'-9" to 18' creating sufficient room to park two (2) additional cars.
5. The proposed curb cut is 24', 4' above the 20' maximum allowed for residential uses. The existing curb cut width is unknown. The applicant intends to relocate the curb cut slightly to the north, away from the abutting property to the south. The purpose of this width is to be proportional to the width/two-door design of the 32' wide garage.
6. The proposed detached garage is consistent with the single-family land use designation in the Future Land Use Map.
7. The Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element; Principle 4 reads: "*Protect and stabilize existing residential neighborhoods by basing land use decisions on neighborhood needs and quality of life. Protect the natural, historic and visual resources that define the neighborhoods*" (p. 34). Relief would not detract from the visual resources that define the neighborhood and would improve existing nonconformities.

PLANNING ANALYSIS

Through this zoning application, the applicant is attempting to make an existing nonconforming condition less nonconforming. The existing garage abuts the lot line between the subject property and Kensington Road and only inches from the interior side lot line between the subject property and the abutting lot (AP 2 Lot 933) to the south. Granting relief would allow the garage to come into greater conformity with both the front and the side setbacks, proposed at a location 5' away from the side lot line (8' is required) and 8'-3" away from the front property line (25' is required).

The location of the existing garage is such that there is not sufficient room for a car to park outside of the garage without hanging out into the street (see picture on page 5). If relief is granted, the driveway will be extended to 18' so that vehicles can be parked in front of the garage doors without extending into the right of way.

Another notable benefit of the proposed garage is that it has been designed to have storage area so that the applicant can raze the existing nonconforming shed located on the interior side property line.

Furthermore, the applicant's 27,890 +/- ft² side corner lot is long and narrow (358' x 67'). Due to the relationship between the lot shape & size, setbacks, and the location of the existing single-family residence, there is no viable location for a detached garage that is not between the primary residence and a public right of way. This is a hardship based on the unique characteristics of the subject property.

The proposed 24' curb cut requires relief to be beyond the 20' maximum allowed for residential purposes. The applicant has a garage with a two-door design as seen on the West Elevation on page 7. They have conveyed to staff that the purpose for the width of the curb cut is to be proportional to the width of the two-door design.

Staff finds the proposal to be *generally consistent* with the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan does not get into very much detail specific to variance requests of this nature, but Land Use Element Principle 4 reads: "*Protect and stabilize existing residential neighborhoods by basing land use decisions on neighborhood needs and quality of life. Protect the natural, historic and visual resources that define the neighborhoods*" (p. 34). Based on the fact that relief would improve several existing nonconformities as well as allow parking in the driveway without encroachment into the street, staff finds the proposal consistent with the above quoted section and the comprehensive plan generally.

RECOMMENDATION:

Due to the finding that relief would reduce or eliminate existing nonconformities, and finding that the proposal is generally consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, staff recommends that the Plan Commission forward a **positive recommendation** on this application to the Zoning Board of Review.